

Understanding Local Peacebuilding: The Dynamics of Local Knowledge Transfer in Peace and Conflict Intervention

Workshop at the University of Konstanz/ Kulturwissenschaftliches Kolleg
Location: Bischofsvilla, Otto-Adam-Str. 5, 78467 Konstanz
03-04 June 2019

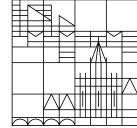
Emerging from criticisms of the underperforming liberal peacebuilding system, the past 15 years has seen a shift away from the technocratic, liberal approaches of the 1990s toward a prioritization of locally owned, bottom-up, micro peacebuilding, in line with broader trends in development policy¹. Academics and practitioners alike call for more hybridity and the contextualization of interventions. Such local peacebuilding approaches, however, demand a detailed understanding of the local context, greater local participation, context-specific solutions, “micro-level perspectives” and the inclusion of local institutions conducive to the overall aims of the intervention. Having said that, we still lack a clear understanding of hybrid peacebuilding and the ways in which it should be enacted or manifest in practice.

This workshop addresses the dynamics of local knowledge, which comes as an essential condition for contextualized local peacebuilding. Every decision taken in peace and conflict interventions is essentially built on a particular interpretation of the local context in which an intervention is carried out. How foreign actors therefore gather *local knowledge* and how they convey it into *organizational knowledge* that informs program decisions is crucial. Local knowledge may refer to facts about the culture, history, politics and interests of inhabitant groups; but also to communication and the management of inter-personal relationships. Foreign peace or aid organizations gather local knowledge constantly, both through formalized techniques such as planning teams, population surveys or peer group interviews, but also through informal anecdotal evidence. In established country offices, it is often the locally recruited personnel who plays a crucial role as the brokers of local information at the boundary between foreign actors and the local environment.

The workshop brings together academics and practitioners who work in the field of peace and conflict and share an interest to better understanding the nature of local peacebuilding. The aim is to better understand the nature of local knowledge in foreign interventions and the processes that shape how external actors gather information on local perceptions and peacebuilding interests. Failure to acknowledge local knowledge has often been linked to failure in delivering effective foreign assistance. Local knowledge can therefore be seen as a key to more effective and relevant program intervention.

The workshop will also be hosting participants from the *Phoenix network*, a group of like-minded researchers and analysts interested in the design and evaluation of peace interventions. The discussions will serve to inform the thinking around a common research project which will be discussed in the margins of the main workshop, as described in the agenda that follows.

¹ See OECD DAC 2005, 2007, 2008, 2012; UN 2011; UNDP 2012.



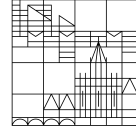
Tentative agenda:

Monday, 03. June

- 13.00 Individual arrival
- 13.30-14.00 Welcome to the core sessions
- 14.00-15.30 Session 1: From liberal to local peacebuilding
Benjamin Zyla, Sarah v. Billerbeck
What lessons have been learned on liberal/ local peacebuilding? What are the promises and challenges of going local? What role does local knowledge play in local peacebuilding?
- 15.30-16.00 Coffee break
- 16.00-18.00 Session 2: Local peacebuilding and local knowledge
Katharina Coleman, Steffen Eckhard, Cedric de Coning
What is local knowledge? How can peace operations gather local knowledge? What role is played by local staff? How are the challenges when international actors seek to align to local social dynamics?
- 19.30 Workshop dinner

Tuesday, 04. June

- 08.30 Coffee
- 09.00-10.30 Session 3: Organizational awareness
Emery Brusset, Jyrki Ruohomaki, Svein Erik Stave
How can peace operations gather local knowledge and raise societal awareness? What analytical tools and methods exist? What is the role of staff selection and training?
- 10.30-11.00 Coffee break



11.00-12.30

Session 4: Impact of local knowledge

Mirco Heinzl, Peter Schumann, Bryn Hughes

What empirical evidence do we have on the impact of local knowledge on operations / performance? What are typical effects caused by presence/ absence of local knowledge?

12.30-13.30

Lunch

13.30-15.00

Wrap-up and outlook

Richard Caplan, Wolfgang Seibel

What are promising directions for future research and organizational reform? What insights do neighboring disciplines such as Public Administration provide?

List of participants

- Bryn Hughes, University of Queensland
- Richard Caplan, Oxford University
- Wolfgang Seibel, Konstanz University
- Sarah von Billerbeck, University of Reading
- Katharina Coleman, University of British Columbia
- Peter Schumann, former DPKO
- Cedric de Coning, NUPI
- Emery Brusset, Social Terrain
- Jyrki Ruohomaki, CMC Finland
- Mikko Patokallio, Crisis Management Initiative
- Svein Erik Stave, FAFO
- Maria Riihelä, FELM
- Mirco Heinzl, Potsdam University
- Kevin Klamann, Konstanz University
- Benjamin Zyla, University of Ottawa (workshop organizer)
- Steffen Eckhard, Konstanz University (workshop organizer)
- Tanja Tamminen, EUAM Ukraine (tent.)
- Maria Mekri, SaferGlobe (tent.)

